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Spring 2020

## HIST 490-002: Environmental Justice in the United States (Revised for Remote Learning)

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**ENVIRONMENTAL INEQUALITY IN POSTWAR AMERICA:  
FROM NEWARK TO NEW YORK AND BEYOND**



History Major Research Seminar: HIST 490:002 (NJIT), R510:490 (RU-N)  
NJIT-Rutgers, Newark: Spring 2020  
Time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.  
Location: Central King Building 214

**Instructor:** Prof. Neil Maher  
Federated Department of History NJIT-Rutgers, Newark

**Office Hours:** 329 Cullimore Hall  
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00-4:00 p.m.  
And by appointment

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Office: 973-596-6348  
Cell: 646-325-3704 (not after 10:00 p.m.)

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

**Overview:** Throughout human history, people's relationship to nature has always been influenced by power. While some groups of people have the authority to gain access to nature, to transform it into natural resources for profit, and then to distance themselves from the negative consequences of such use, other groups do not. This environmental inequality can stem from obvious differences involving race, class, and gender, but is often also based on more subtle distinctions involving age, physical disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, and cultural practice. In all cases, however, while the powerful tend to reap nature's benefits, the weak pay the price. This research seminar examines this longstanding, unequal relationship to nature in post-World War II America.

**Course Schedule:** The schedule for the semester is divided into three parts. To better understand the history of environmental discrimination in America since 1945, we will spend the first 4 weeks of the semester reviewing the history of environmental discrimination and the environmental justice movement. Beginning with week 5, we will shift our attention to understanding how one "does history." This will include reading assignments and in-class discussions that will help students choose a research topic, locate archival sources, and organize their research data. Finally, the last 2 weeks of the semester will be dedicated to a "Paper Writing Workshop," during which the entire class will read and critique a rough draft of your final paper project.

**Local Research:** One of the goals of the Federated History Department's senior research seminar is to familiarize students with both local history and its archival opportunities. To foster this, during the early part of this semester we will take 3 field trips to local archives located at Rutgers University's Dana Library, the Newark Public Library, and the Ironbound Community Corporation. All of these field trips will be undertaken during our normal class hours. During class time we will also take an environmental justice tour of Newark's Ironbound neighborhood.

**Mapping Your Project Online:** Throughout the semester students will upload their course assignments to an Environmental Justice Mapping Website that I have created for this course. The website will include a shared map that locates each of your chosen sites in geographic relation to one another, as well as links to individual "project webpages" that have been created for each student. The goal of this website and digital archive is to provide an open-source, interactive, geographic database of environmental justice sites, and their history, in the Newark-New York City region and beyond.

**Collaboration Across Campus:** Throughout the semester we will be collaborating with several organizations on the Rutgers-Newark campus, including the Price Institute on Ethnicity and Culture, the Eco-Working Group, and the Humanities Action Lab. All of these groups are working with students who are also involved in environmental justice research but approaching it through art, film, and other disciplines. During the semester there will be opportunities to meet with these students in order to exchange ideas and information regarding your projects.

## **COURSE GOALS:**

There are four major goals for this course.

1. Students will understand the history of environmental inequality in the post-World War II United States.
2. Students will locate both primary and secondary source materials relevant to the history of their chosen environmental justice site.
3. Students will use those primary and secondary sources to analyze, organize, and write a final historical research paper on their chosen site.
4. Students will share their research with the public by uploading all of their historical data to the course's web-based Environmental Justice Map.

## **REQUIREMENTS:**

**Attendance and Class Participation:** This is one of the most important components of your final grade. Because this is a small, seminar-style course, class participation should involve active listening and engagement. It is essential that reading be done on time (each day before we meet) and that everyone come to class ready to raise questions and participate actively. Absence from class means you won't be able to participate, and doing so will therefore hurt your grade. If you do miss a class meeting, you are responsible for finding out what was missed and making up any assignments. Attendance will be taken during each class session.

**Reading Assignments:** Reading assignments will average approximately 75-100 pages per week, and will consist of three types of materials. During the initial 5 weeks of the semester, we will familiarize ourselves with the history of environmental inequality in America since 1945 by reading several articles on environmental discrimination and the environmental justice movement. In the middle of the semester we will read a book that explains how historians "do" history — this book will help you choose a research topic, locate source materials for that research topic, organize your research, and also help you outline and write your final assignments. Finally, during the last several weeks of the course, your assignment will be to read the secondary and primary sources that you have collected for your own project.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

Because this is a Senior Research Seminar, this class will be a writing-intensive course. Yet you will also have opportunities to express your research in non-written form. In each of the assignments described below, you will be graded on both your ideas and your writing.

### **1. On-Line Reader's Responses:**

Before many of our class meetings you will be asked to post to Moodle a "Reader's Response" to the assigned reading. Directions for each "Reader's Response" can be found on our Moodle page under each week's assignment. To locate these directions, log into our course Moodle webpage, go to the week for which you are submitting a response, and click on the Forum tab. The Forum will then open in another window, and you will see my directions for that particular Reader's Response assignment.

### **2. Historical Data Collection:**

For your final research project, you will first choose a specific site where environmental injustice occurred during the post-World War II period. This place can be many things – a public park, a toxic waste site, even a golf course. It can also come in a wide variety of sizes: it can be as small as an individual building or a street corner or as large or larger than an entire neighborhood. After choosing your site, you will complete the following 6 assignments, all of which will become components to your final written project (more detailed descriptions of these assignments will be distributed in class):

- *Project Site Description:* This one-page assignment entails describing the environmental inequality that took place at your chosen site, and then listing 4 historical questions that you will be examining during your research. **Due: February 25**
- *Annotated Secondary Bibliography:* Here you will locate at least 3 secondary sources relevant to your project. You will then provide a short description of each source, and explain in a paragraph how each one will help you with various parts of your final written project. **Due: Feb 29**
- *Primary Source Report:* For this assignment you will locate 5 primary sources related to your chosen site. Then, in one paragraph for each source, you will explain how the source will help you analyze the history of power inequality playing out across your chosen site. **Due: March 7**
- *Image Analysis:* For this assignment you will locate an historical image or images of your chosen site, and then undertake a close analytical "reading" of the image(s). Such images can include maps, photographs, film clips, and even artist's renderings. Your image analysis will be two pages long. **Due: March 22**
- *Scientific Data Analysis:* For this assignment you will first locate a set of historical scientific data that is relevant to your chosen site. This data can be from a government report, an independent study of your site, or even data gathered by local people who live or work near the site. You will then use our course website (see below) to process the data and analyze it in ways that are relevant to your project. **Due: April 4**

- *Oral Interview or Video Essay:* You will have two options for this assignment. First, you may conduct and record an oral interview with someone involved in the history of your chosen site. This can be a local resident, an activist who raised public attention, a worker who labored at the site, or anyone with a personal relationship to your site. Alternately, you can create your own video on your project. This can involve you visiting the site, explaining one of your sources, or telling a story of environmental discrimination that took place at your site. **Due: April 14**

### **3. Final Historical Project:**

Your final project will be a 12-15 page “Environmental Justice Site Report” that includes many of the assignments listed above. This final report, in other words, will include your image and scientific data analysis as well as links to your oral interview or video essay. The final project will thus be a multi-media report on your chosen environmental justice site. **Due: May 10**

- *Paper Outline:* To help you organize your paper, you will submit an outline that you will rely on while writing your final paper.

### **GRADING:**

In-Class Participation and On-Line Reader’s Responses:	25%
Historical Data Collection Assignments	25%
Final Research Paper	50%
Consistent effort and improvement will be weighted heavily in grading.	

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

*The Craft of Research*, by Booth, et. al. (University of Chicago Press, 2008). Fourth Edition (**This must be the 4<sup>th</sup> edition**)

Various articles that you can download from our Moodle page.

NOTE: Please remember to bring the article and book to class (no electronic copies) when we are reading them. We will constantly refer to these readings during in-class discussions.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

All Students should be aware that the Federated History Department takes the NJIT and Rutgers honor codes seriously and enforces them strictly. Because of the nature of our assignments, if you plagiarize it will be obvious and I will be forced to report such actions to the Dean of Students. If you are caught plagiarizing, you will fail the course for the semester and therefore not be able to graduate.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **WEEK 1: THE SYLLABUS**

January 22: **Environmental Justice and Historical Research**

Required Reading:

The syllabus

In-Class Discussion:

The course website and your potential research projects

### **PART I: THE HISTORY OF ENVIRONMENTAL INEQUALITY**

#### **WEEK 2: THE CAUSES**

January 27: **Defining Environmental Justice**

Required Reading:

Cole & Foster, *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement*, pps. 1-33.

Assignment:

Reader's Response on reading (due on Moodle, 9:00 a.m. day of class).

January 29: **Race vs. Poverty – Los Angeles, California** (Guest, Leora Fuller)

Mike Davis, "The Case for Letting Malibu Burn," *Environmental History Review* 19, no. 2 (Summer, 1995), pp. 1-36.

Assignment:

Reader's Response on reading (due on Moodle, 9:00 a.m. day of class).

#### **WEEK 3: BUILDING A MOVEMENT**

February 3: **Grassroots Activism – San Antonio, Texas**

Required Reading:

Char Miller, "Streetscape Environmentalism: Floods, Social Justice, and Political Power in San Antonio, 1921–1974," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* CXVIII, no. 2 (October 2014): 159-177.

Assignment:

Reader's Response on reading (due on Moodle, 9:00 a.m. day of class).

February 5: **Class Trip to Dana Library**  
Required Reading:  
Valerie S. Thaler, "Teaching Historical Research Skills to Generation Y: One Instructor's Approach," in *The History Teacher* 46, No. 2 (February 2013): 267-281.

Assignment:  
Reader's Response on reading (due on Moodle, 9:00 a.m. day of class).

#### **WEEK 4: THINKING LOCALLY**

February 10: **Class Trip to the Newark Public Library**  
Required Reading:  
George Hawley, "Newark Public Library: Finding Aid," 1-5.

Assignment:  
Reader's Response on reading (due on Moodle, 9:00 a.m. day of class).

February 12: **Newark, New Jersey**  
Required Reading:  
Sara Grossman, "Off the Rails," on Newest Americans  
(<http://newestamericans.com/OFF-THE-RAILS/>)  
"Dirty Little Secrets" (NJ Public Radio) <https://www.wnyc.org/story/nj-contaminated-sites/>

Assignment:  
Reader's Response on reading (due on Moodle, 9:00 a.m. day of class).

### **PART III: DOING HISTORY**

#### **WEEK 5: TELLING STORIES**

February 17: **Making it Personal** (Guest — Leora Fuller)  
Required Reading:  
Adrienne Maree Brown, "Introduction," in *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* (download from Moodle site).

Assignment:  
Reader's response on reading (due on Moodle, 9:00 a.m. day of class).



February 19: **Class Trip to the Ironbound Community Corporation**

Required Reading:

“Picturing Justice,” ICC website and photo archive,:

<http://picturingjustice.tumblr.com/page/2>

Assignment:

Reader’s Response on reading (due on Moodle, 9:00 a.m. day of class).

**WEEK 6: CHOOSING A TOPIC**

February 24: **From Historical Questions to Research Topic**

Required Reading:

Booth, *Craft of Research*, pages 3-64

Assignment:

Reader’s Response on reading (due on Moodle, 9:00 a.m. day of class).

February 26: **Project Site Description Workshop**

Required Reading:

Each other’s “Project Site Description”

Assignments:

1. **Project Site Description** (due on course website, Tues, Feb 25, 5:00 p.m.)
2. **Written comments** on your classmate’s proposals (due in class)

**Collaboration Opportunity:** Eco-Group Student Mixer, free period  
(2:30-5:00), location to be determined (Extra Credit!)

**WEEK 7: LOCATING EVIDENCE**

March 2: **Secondary Source Workshop**

Required Reading:

Each other’s “Secondary Annotated Bibliographies”

Assignment:

1. **Secondary Annotated Bibliography** (due on course website, Sat, Feb 29, 5:00 pm)
2. **Written comments** on classmates’ Secondary Bibliography (due in class)

March 4:     **How to Read Primary Sources**  
              Required Reading:  
              Booth, *Craft of Research*, pages 65-104

Assignment:  
              Reader's Response on reading (due on Moodle, 9:00 a.m. day of class).

## **WEEK 8: ANALYZING SOURCES**

March 9:     **Primary Source Workshop**  
              Required Reading:  
              Each other's "Primary Source Report"

Assignment:  
              1. **Primary Source Report** (due on course website, Sat, March 7, 5:00 p.m.)  
              2. **Written comments** on classmates' Primary Source Report (due in class)

March 11:    **Thinking with Images**  
              Required Reading:  
              Cindy Ott, "Visual Details as Clues," unpublished essay, 1-15.  
              Robin Kelsey, "Norman Rockwell's Glen Canyon Dam," 416- 422.

Assignment:  
              Reader's Response on reading (due on Moodle, 9:00 a.m. day of class).

## **SPRING BREAK**

March 16 & 18: **Writing Your Image Analysis Report**  
              Required Reading:  
              A close reading of an image pertaining to your site.

Assignment:  
              Write Your Image Analysis Report.

## **WEEK 9: VIDEO ESSAYS AND STORYMAPS**

March 23:    **Making Video Essays** (Guest – Leora Fuller)  
              Required Reading:  
              None – Read for your project on your own.

Assignment:  
              **Image Analysis** (due on course website, Sunday, March 22, by 5:00 p.m.)

March 25: **Image Analysis Workshop**  
Required Reading:  
Each other's Image Analysis Report

Assignment:  
**Written comments** on your classmates' Image Analysis (2 copies due in class)

## **WEEK 10: ORAL INTERVIEWS AND SCIENTIFIC DATA**

March 30: **Conducting Oral Interviews**  
Required Reading:  
"Oral History Best Practices: Introduction": 1-11.

Assignment:  
Reader's Response on reading (due on Moodle, 9:00 a.m. day of class).

April 1: **Understanding Scientific Data**  
Required Reading:  
"EJSCREEN Users Guide," 1-59.

Required Watching:  
"EJSCREEN Tutorial: Basic Features," available at:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=22&v=N1ntgL93cgY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=22&v=N1ntgL93cgY)  
(6 minutes long)  
"EJSCREEN Tutorial: Generating Reports," available at:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=249&v=pCjFo30qRBE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=249&v=pCjFo30qRBE)  
(8 minutes on DATA)  
"How to Interpret an EJSCREEN Standard Report, available at:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=47&v=eZ8-9Mx8UgI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=47&v=eZ8-9Mx8UgI)  
(5 minutes long on DATA)  
"EJSCREEN Tutorial: Basic Add Maps Feature," available at:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=111&v=N1ntgL93cgY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=111&v=N1ntgL93cgY)  
(4 minutes long on MAPPING)  
"EJSCREEN Tutorial: Advanced "Add Map" Features, available at:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=24&v=4RSJ0nI0moc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=24&v=4RSJ0nI0moc)  
(4 minutes on MAPPING)

Assignment:  
Reader's Response in which you pull scientific data from EJSCREEN  
(due on Moodle, 9:00 a.m. day of class).

## WEEK 11: MAKING ARGUMENTS

April 6: **Scientific Data Workshop**

Required Reading:

Each other's Scientific Data Analysis reports

Assignment:

1. **Scientific Data Analysis** (due on course website, Sat, April 4, 5:00 p.m.)
2. **Written comments** on classmates' Scientific Data Analysis (due in class)

April 8: **Understanding Warrants (Linking Evidence to Arguments)**

Required Reading:

Booth, *Craft of Research*, pages 105-172.

Assignment:

Reader's Response on reading (due on Moodle, 9:00 a.m. day of class).

## WEEK 12: ORGANIZING YOUR EVIDENCE

April 13: **The Art of Outlining and Note Taking**

Required Reading:

Booth, *Craft of Research*, 173-199.

Assignment:

Reader's Response on reading (due on Moodle, 9:00 a.m. day of class).

April 15: **Oral Interview and Video Story Workshop**

Required Reading:

Booth, *Craft of Research*, 200-247.

Assignment:

1. **Oral Interview or Video Essay** (due on course website, Tues, April 14, 5:00 p.m.)
2. **Written comments** on classmates' Interview/Video (due in class)

## PART IV: PAPER WRITING WORKSHOP

## WEEK 13: OUTLINING

April 20: **Outline Workshop I**

Required Reading:

Each other's outlines

Assignment:

1. **Preliminary Paper Outline** (due on Moodle, Saturday, April 18, 5:00 p.m.)
2. **Written comments** on your classmates' outlines (due in class)

April 22: **Outline Workshop II**

Required Reading:

Each other's outlines

Assignment:

1. **Preliminary Paper Outline** (due on Moodle Tuesday, April 21, 9:00 a.m. in the morning!)
2. **Written comments** on each of your classmates' outlines (due in class)

**WEEK 14: WRITING A DRAFT**

April 27: **Paper Writing Workshop I**

Required Reading:

Booth, *Craft of Research*, 248-267

One another's Paper Drafts

Assignment:

1. **Paper Drafts** (due on Moodle by Saturday, April 25, 5:00 p.m.)
2. **Written Comments** on your classmates Paper Drafts (due in class)

April 29: **Paper Writing Workshop II**

Required Reading:

One another's Paper Drafts

Assignment:

1. **Paper Drafts** (due on Moodle, Tues, April 28, at 9:00 a.m. in morning)
2. **Written Comments** on your classmates Paper Drafts (due in class)

**WEEK 15: WRITING A DRAFT (CONTINUED)**

May 4: **Paper Writing Workshop III**

Required Reading:

One another's Paper Drafts

Assignment:

1. **Paper Drafts** (due on Moodle by 5:00 p.m., Saturday, May 2)
2. **Written Comments** on your classmates Paper Drafts (due in class)